Tobacco Policy

† 3795. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of farmers have become idle due to tobacco policy;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to remove their problems by giving them other crops; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) The areas of tobacco remains almost stable for many years which is evident from the following table:

Year	Area coverage (million ha.)
1970-71	0.45
1980-81	0.45
1990-91	0.41
1996-97	0.43
1997-98	0.46
1998-99	0.46

Thus it is evident that the tobacco farmers ore engaged in tobacco cultivation.

(b) and (c) The alternate crops suggested by research system of ICAR replacing tobacco crop in irrigated as well as unirrigated areas are as follows:

(i) Irrigated Areas: Oilpalm, sugarcane, groundnut, cotton, chillies, maize, onion, cucumber, vegetables, blackgrara, greengram, mustard, ragi, caster-groundnut, cotton-groundnut, pigeonpea-groundnut,

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

paddy-mustard, potato, ginger-wheat, tomato, bhindi, cabbage, cauliflower, garlic, tomato, brinjal and pulses, redgram, turmetic.

(ii) Unirrigated Areas: Sorghum, mustard, greengram, coriander, cotton, bengalgram, blackgram, greengram, soyabean, redgram, sunflower, safflower, groundnut, maize.bajra, caster, etc.

Due to agro-ecological suitability as well as cost economic return to the farmers, shift from tobacco cultivation is not being adopted by the farmers.

Low price of agricultural produce

3796. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in view of low price, farmers producing paddy, oil seeds and oil palm are facing severe problem;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of steps takeiyproposed to be taken by Government to redress their grievances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) The prices of some agricultural commodities including paddy, oilseeds and oil palm have declined during the last one year or so causing concern among the farmers. The fall in prices may be attributed to increased availability by way of higher production and imports and fail in international prices for major agricultural commodities.

(c) Steps taken to protect the interests of the fanners include fixation of the minimum support prices (MSPs) of major agricultural commodities and procurement thereof through public and cooperative agencies, implementation of market intervention scheme (MIS) covering horticultural and minor items of the produce at the request of the State Governments and using instruments of trade to discourage imports and encourage exports. The Government is implementing MIS for procurement of oil palm fresh fruit bunches (FFBs) to provide reasonable prices to the oil palm growers, besides,